HAYATO-KUN'S...

...FIANCÉE?!

THIS PRINCESS *FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY* IS HIS FIANCÉE?!

YES ...

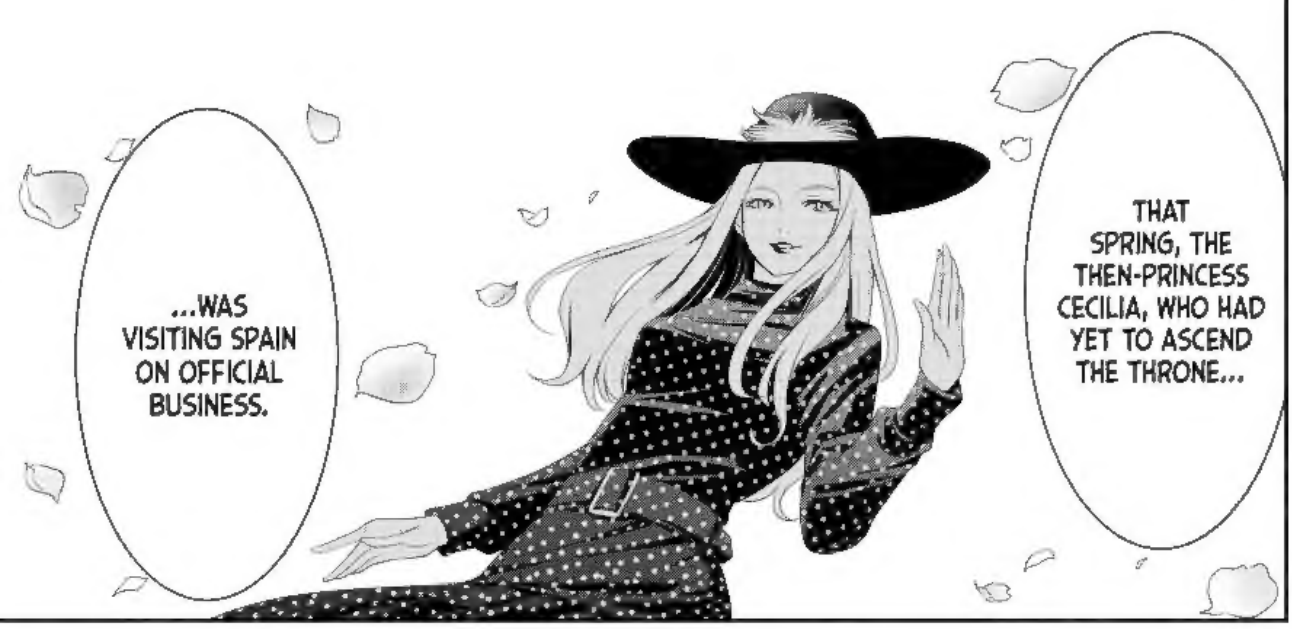
BUT BEFORE I EXPLAIN THAT...

...I SHOULD TELL YOU MORE ABOUT SACHIKO KASUKABE.

ABOUT GRAND-MA?

THE CAFÉ TERRACE AND ITS GODDESSES

#136 The Queen's Chef


...WAS VISITING SPAIN ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS.
THAT SPRING, THE THEN-PRINCESS CECILIA, WHO HAD YET TO ASCEND THE THRONE...

...SO WE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO INVITE HER THERE FOR AN OFFICIAL DINNER.
AMBASSADOR FUWA HAD THE IDEA OF INVITING THE PRINCESS TO THE JAPANESE EMBASSY...

THE AMBASSADOR INSTRUCTED ME TO FIND A REPLACEMENT CHEF IMMEDIATELY.

APPENDI-CITIS IS PRETTY COMMON, HUH?
UNFORTUNATELY, THE CHEF TO THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE WAS HOSPITALIZED THE DAY BEFORE THE DINNER WITH APPENDICITIS.

SO I DECIDED TO ASK THE HEAD CHEF OF A THREE-STAR RESTAURANT I HAPPENED TO FREQUENT TO FILL IN FOR THEM.
AND THAT PERSON WAS CHEF SACHIKO KASUKABE.

WHAT?! MOTHER, YOU KNEW HAYATO'S GRANDMA?!
AKANE... ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP INTERRUPTING MY STORY?
BUT YOU KEEP JUST CASUALLY THROWING THIS STUFF AT US WITH NO WARNING!!
"STUFF"?
AH... SORRY.

YES...
WHEN I WAS PONDERING WHETHER TO QUIT THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE AND TAKE OVER THE FAMILY BUSINESS...
...SHE SAID THE SAME THING THAT YOU TOLD ME THEN.

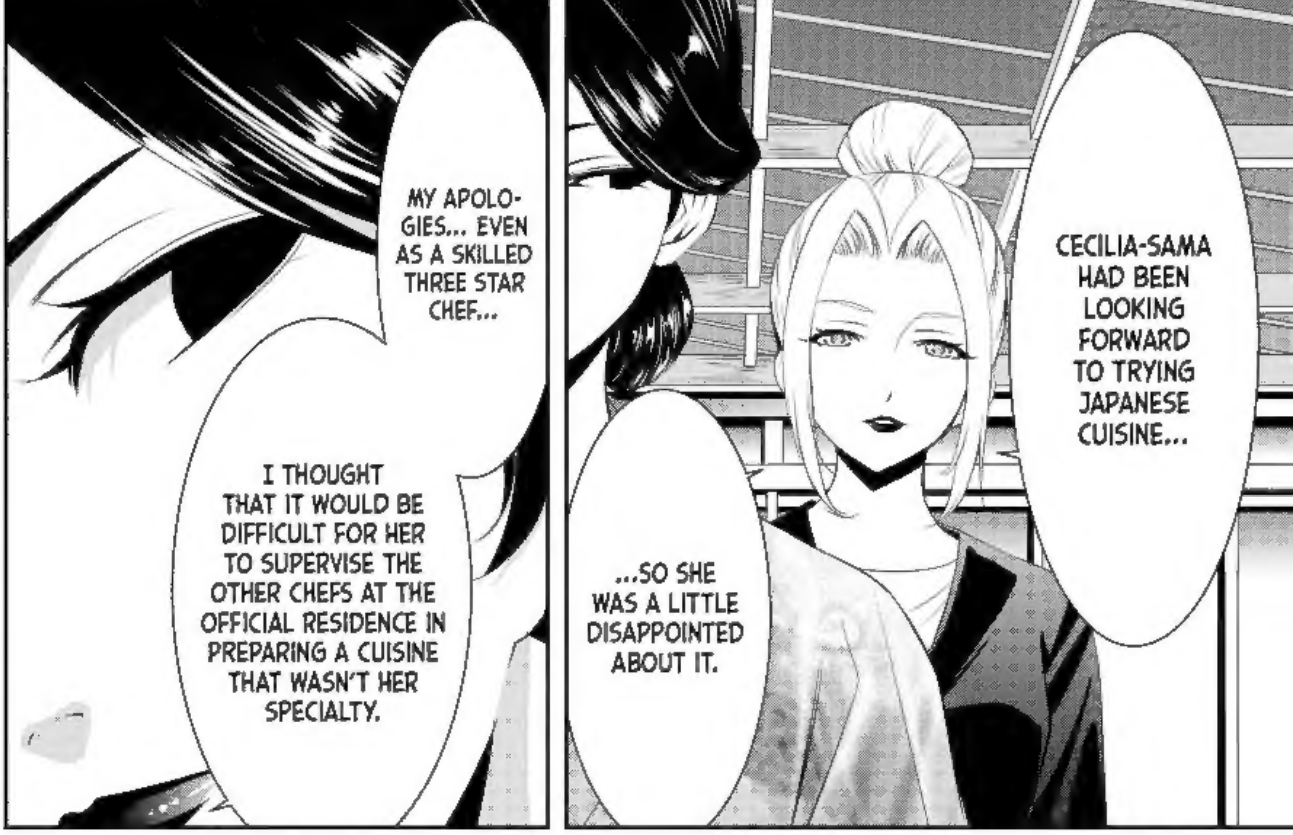
SO WHEN YOU WERE HERE LAST YEAR...
...THAT CURIOUS COINCIDENCE THAT YOU SPOKE OF... IT WAS THIS?

SO IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT SOMETHING, YOU CAN TELL ME.
NO MATTER HOW WELL THE COFFEE IS BREWED, IT'S MEANINGLESS IF THE DRINKER'S HEART ISN'T IN IT.

...I STARTED ASKING HER FOR ADVICE ON VARIOUS MATTERS...
THEN...

COOL!
COOL!
COOL!
JUST AS I THOUGHT THE STORY WAS GETTING INTERESTING, TOO.
SO COOL AND COL-LECTED.
WELL, THAT ISN'T RELEVANT, SO I'LL SPARE YOU THOSE DETAILS.

WE DECIDED TO HAVE THEM COOK SPANISH DISHES FOR THE DINNER.
...!
I ASKED KASUKABE-SAN TO BRING A CHEF FROM HER OWN RESTAURANT ALONG WITH HER.

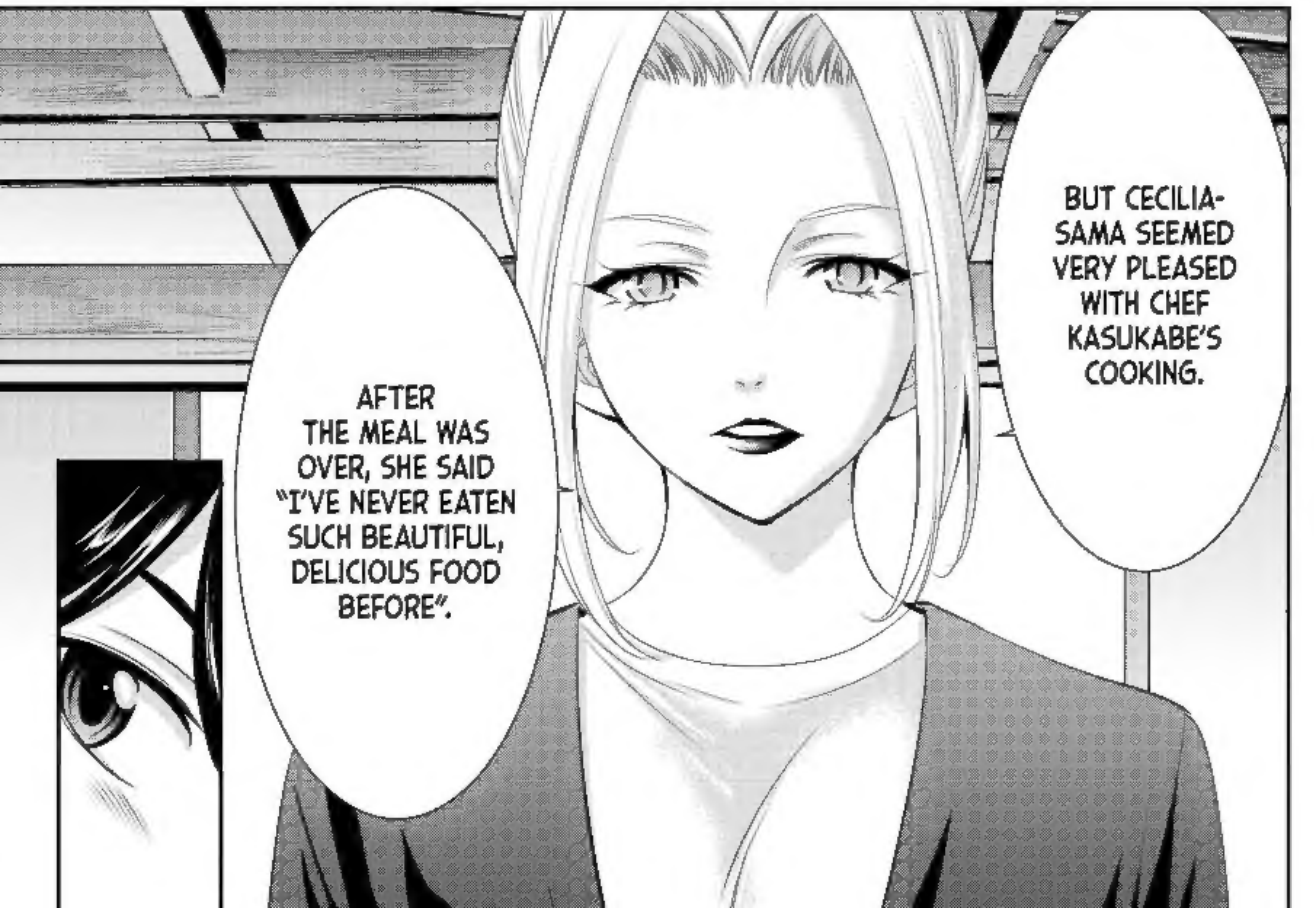

CECILIA-SAMA HAD BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO TRYING JAPANESE CUISINE...
...SO SHE WAS A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED ABOUT IT.
MY APOLOGIES... EVEN AS A SKILLED THREE STAR CHEF...
I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR HER TO SUPERVISE THE OTHER CHEFS AT THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE IN PREPARING A CUISINE THAT WASN'T HER SPECIALTY.

...
FIDGET
FIDGET
IS SOMETHING WRONG, DAD?

BUT TO THINK THAT *YOU* WERE THE NOVICE CHEF WHO DOUSED THE PRINCESS IN WATER THAT TIME, ONO-SAN...
WHAT A CURIOUS COINCIDENCE.
WAIT...YOU PROMISED THAT YOU'D NEVER TALK ABOUT THAT IN FRONT OF MY DAUGHTER!!
HUH? HOW DID THAT HAPPEN, DAD?

AMBASSADOR FUWA... HE LOOKED AS THOUGH HE WAS GOING TO FAINT.
SARA-SAN!!
HEH HEH. IT WAS QUITE THE SIGHT.
ANYONE'D BE NERVOUS ENOUGH FOR A GLASS TO SLIP OUT OF THEIR HAND...
IF THEY WERE ONLY IN THEIR TWENTIES AND GOT INVITED TO THE EMBASSY AND SPOKEN TO BY A PRINCESS!!
R... RIGHT.

NOT ANOTHER WORD, HAYATO-KUN!!
AH...SO THIS WAS ONE OF THOSE *FAILURES AND SETBACKS THAT YOU NEVER TALKED ABOUT* IN FRONT OF YOUR DAUGHTER?


BUT CECILIA-SAMA SEEMED VERY PLEASED WITH CHEF KASUKABE'S COOKING.
AFTER THE MEAL WAS OVER, SHE SAID "I'VE NEVER EATEN SUCH BEAUTIFUL, DELICIOUS FOOD BEFORE".

WOOOW!! JUST AS I'D EXPECT FROM HAYATO-KUN'S GRANDMOTHER!!
W...WELL, I'D EXPECT ANY THREE STAR CHEF TO HAVE AT LEAST THAT LEVEL OF SKILL.
HOWEVER, BACK THEN CECILIA-SAMA HAD...
...A RATHER ASSERTIVE TEMPERA-MENT.

FOR HER REMAINING FIVE DAYS IN SPAIN...
...SHE INSISTED ON EATING CHEF KASUKABE'S SPANISH COOKING.

INCIDENTALLY, AMBASSADOR FUWA EVEN REPRIMANDED HER FOR IT, SAYING "DON'T GIVE THAT WOMAN ANY MORE CREDIT"...
I NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY, BUT HE GREW NOTICEABLY MORE IRRITABLE THE MOMENT I INTRO-DUCED HIM TO KASUKABE-SAN.

WELL...
OF COURSE HE WOULD.

I SEE... SO THE OLD MAN RESENTED THE FACT THAT HE HAD TO BE HELPED BY SOMEONE THAT HE HATED TO DEATH...
...AND THAT'S WHY HE BULLIED GRANDMA.

BUT ON THE FINAL DAY, CHEF KASUKABE TOLD US THAT SHE'D GONE THROUGH ALL OF THE DISHES IN HER REPERTOIRE.
SHE ASKED CECILIA-SAMA IF SHE'D MIND EATING SOMETHING SHE'D ALREADY EATEN BEFORE...

SO SARA-SAN AND I ARRANGED IT BETWEEN US.
YES.
YOU REALLY WENT ABOVE AND BEYOND, HUH?
WE SECRETLY BROUGHT KASUKABE-SAN TO THE HOTEL WHERE THE PRINCESS WAS STAYING.

AKANE-CHAN, THAT'S RUDE, YOU KNOW?
SO DOES "ASSERTIVE" JUST MEAN "SELFISH"?
...BUT CECILIA-SAMA INSISTED AND SAID "NO. FOR THIS LAST DAY, I WANT YOU TO BRING THE BEST DISH I'LL EVER HAVE TASTED."

THE PRINCESS WAS VERY SATISFIED, AND DECLARED THAT IT WAS THE BEST DISH SHE HAD EVER TASTED.
BUT SHE PREPARED A DISH FROM HER NEW MENU, WHICH WAS NOT YET COMPLETE.
CHEF KASUKABE SEEMED TROUBLED BY HER REQUEST...

SHE TOLD US THAT SHE HAD YET TO GIVE IT A NAME...
EXCUSE ME...!
WHAT KIND OF DISH WAS IT, MAY I ASK?!

!

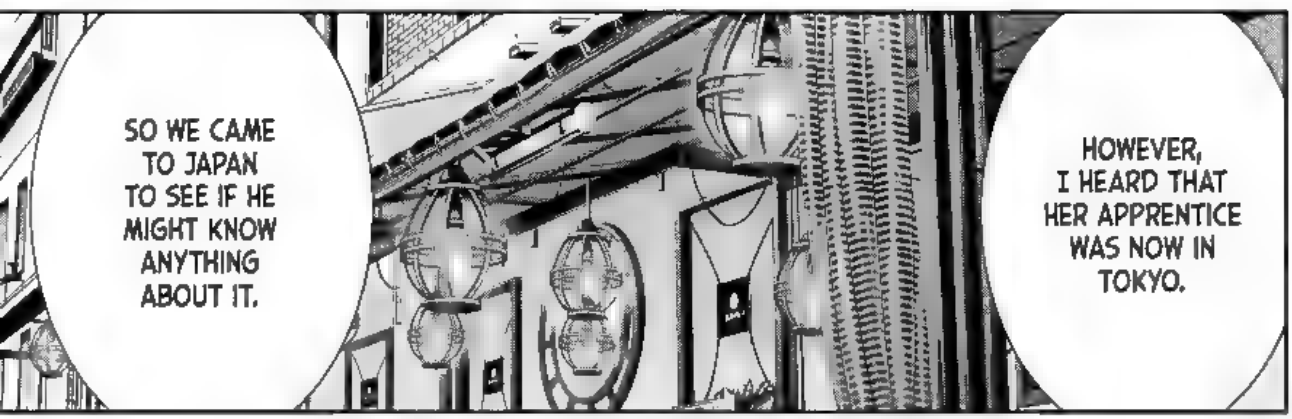
IT LOOKED LIKE A RISOTTO...
BUT WHEN I TRIED A BITE OF IT TO TEST FOR POISON...
IT HAD A DIFFERENT FLAVOR. IT WAS DEEPER, MORE COMPLEX.
*A Spanish specialty generally consisting of short-grain rice in broth, with meat, garlic, and or onions, and sometimes sherry or port
ARROZ CALDOSO?
YES.
IT'S LIKE A SPANISH STYLE RISOTTO.
I WONDER... GRANDMA SAID THAT ARROZ CALDOSO* WAS A SPECIALTY OF HERS, COULD IT HAVE BEEN THAT?
HUH?
IT SEEMS THAT THEY'VE ALREADY TRIED THAT.

IT SEEMS THAT SHE WISHES TO EAT THAT UNNAMED DISH AGAIN.
APPARENTLY, HER MAJESTY HAS BEEN IN LOW SPIRITS FOR THE PAST YEAR OR SO.

BUT UNFORTU-NATELY...
...SHE HAS THUS FAR BEEN UNABLE TO RECREATE THE FLAVORS OF THAT PARTICULAR DISH.

AS PRINCESS OLIVIA KNOWS HOW TO COOK...
...SHE HAS TRIED TO CHEER HER MOTHER UP BY USING SARA-SAN'S MEMORIES TO PUT TOGETHER VARIOUS DISHES.

DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT, MOTHER?
NO...NOT AT ALL.
SO I CONTACTED HOUOUJI-SAN AND ASKED HER...
IF WE COULD HAVE THE CHEF FROM BACK THEN COOK FOR US ONCE AGAIN.
BUT REGRETTABLY, SHE TOLD US THAT CHEF KASUKABE HAD PASSED AWAY THE PREVIOUS YEAR...


HOWEVER, I HEARD THAT HER APPRENTICE WAS NOW IN TOKYO.
SO WE CAME TO JAPAN TO SEE IF HE MIGHT KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

OH...WAS THAT WHY YOU WANTED TO MAKE A RESERVATION AT DAD'S RESTAURANT?
YES. I APOLOGIZE FOR MAKING SUCH AN UNREASONABLE REQUEST.

PRINCESS OLIVIA SAID THAT SHE WANTED TO BE ABLE TO MAKE IT HERSELF.
SHE, SARA-SAN, AND I TRIED VARIOUS COMBINATIONS IN THE RESTAURANT KITCHEN...
...BUT IN THE END, WE WERE UNSUCCESSFUL.
TO BE HONEST, I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING. I DON'T HAVE ANY IDEAS LEFT.
IF THIS DISH EXISTS, I WISH SHE'D TOLD ME ABOUT IT.
...
BUT...
PERHAPS WITH THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF HER GRANDSON AND HER LAST APPRENTICE...

HAYATO-KUN, WHO LIVED WITH KASUKABE-SAN FOR 12 YEARS.
OR SHIRAGIKU, WHO STUDIED COOKING FROM HER FOR A YEAR.
I THOUGHT ONE OR BOTH OF YOU MIGHT HAVE AN IDEA OF WHAT IT COULD BE.

I SEE... SO THAT'S WHAT ALL OF THIS IS ABOUT.
YES... I'M SORRY TO ASK, BUT DOES ANYTHING COME TO MIND?

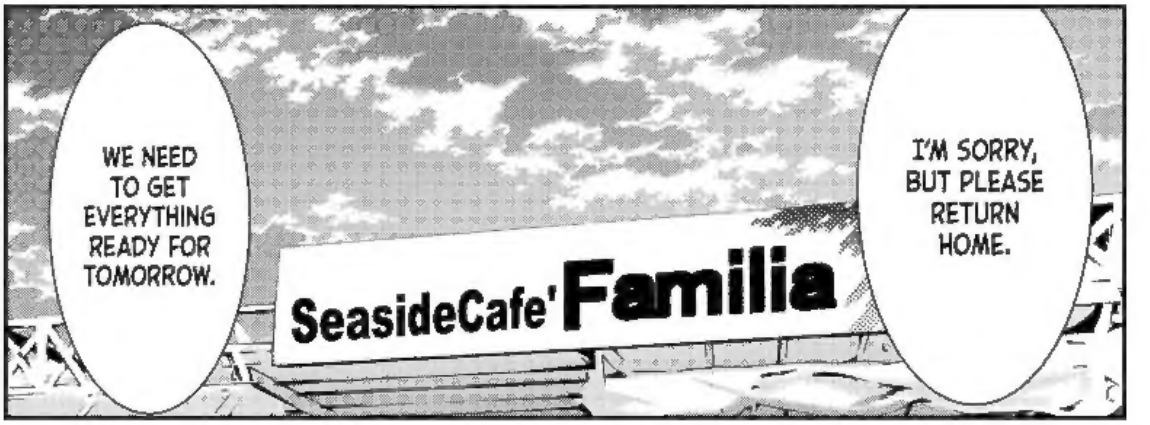
HAVING LISTENED TO EVERYTHING YOU'VE BEEN SAYING...
...THERE'S ONE THING THAT'S BEEN BOTHERING ME.

WHEN EXACTLY ARE YOU GOING TO EXPLAIN THE WHOLE FIANCÉ THING?
RIGHT?
I DID WONDER WHEN YOU WERE GOING TO BRING THAT UP.
OH RIGHT...

KASUKABE-SAN WAS EXCHANGING IDLE CHATTER WITH HER MAJESTY AND SAID...
"IF MY GRANDCHILD AND YOUR CHILD END UP BEING A BOY AND A GIRL, WE SHOULD HAVE THEM GET MARRIED".
AND APPARENTLY, SHE RESPONDED ...
"OH, THAT WOULD BE NICE".
IDLE CHATTER?!

ENOUGH OF THAT FOOLISH TALK. HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF ANYTHING, HAYATO-KUN?
FOOLISH TALK?!

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT A DISH LIKE THAT!!
WHAT ABOUT YOU, SHIRA-GIKU?
I'M SORRY, I DON'T KNOW EITHER...


I'M SORRY, BUT PLEASE RETURN HOME.
SeasideCafe' Familia
WE NEED TO GET EVERYTHING READY FOR TOMORROW.

FORTU-NATELY, AT THIS TIME OF YEAR...
OLIVIA-SAMA IS USUALLY RELAXING AT THE HEALTH RESORT IN HER VACATION HOME.
IN THE MEANTIME, WE'VE PUT A BODY DOUBLE IN PLACE.

CLACK
カリ
NO...
IT SIMPLY ISN'T POSSIBLE FOR US TO RETURN EMPTY-HANDED AFTER COMING ALL THIS WAY.
I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT, BUT...

SO I APOLOGIZE FOR ASKING THIS, BUT UNTIL ONE OF YOU REMEMBERS SOMETHING...
...WOULD YOU ALLOW THE TWO OF US TO STAY AT THE KASUKABE RESIDENCE?
THE CAFÉ TERRACE AND ITS GODDESSES

...
WHAT?
COOL!
COOL!
COOL!